

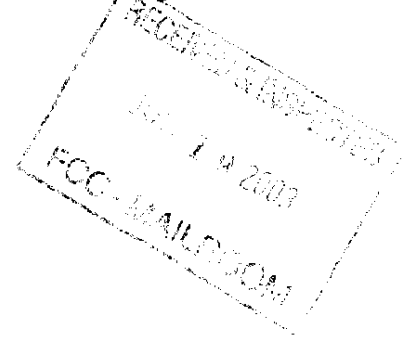
EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

June 12, 2003

Michele Wolf
1239 Hillside Avenue
Honesdale, PA 18431

Office of the Secretary of the FCC
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DA 20554

ORIGINAL



Re: Ex Parte comment for docket number 90-571 on NECA Funds and Ex Parte comment to docket number 98-67 on TRS/STS Outreach

Dear Secretary:

I reside in Pennsylvania and currently have three young children. My youngest child was diagnosed with bacterial meningitis at the age of five months. During his illness he suffered from seizures and a stroke. It is truly a miracle that he is with us today. The stroke caused a lot of damage, much of which he has overcome due to physical and occupational therapy. However, he still struggles with a speech disability. He is now 3.5 years old and cannot communicate with children his age. It breaks my heart to see children and adults who make fun of him. Any service to help him and other individuals with speech disabilities would be beneficial.

With this, I urge the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission to work together to make telephones accessible to more people with speech disabilities by increasing Speech-to-Speech (STS) outreach services in Pennsylvania.

I also encourage AT&T to improve its STS services. Many AT&T Communications Assistants (CAs) have southern accents, which are difficult for people outside the South to understand. CAs should speak with accents appropriate to the area of the country, which they serve. In addition, many AT&T CAs appear reluctant to revoice what consumers say. CAs need to be more willing to revoice.

Providing STS outreach appropriate to people with speech disabilities is an essential part of access. When people with speech disabilities have appropriate training in the use of STS, they become more independent, participate more in the community, get decent jobs, etc. The new relay regulations require states and relay providers to contract such that relay is accessible to users with speech disabilities.

If STS is provided in Pennsylvania without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Providing appropriate outreach for STS means Pennsylvania residents with speech disabilities can use STS as a vehicle to enter the mainstream of life.

MAILED

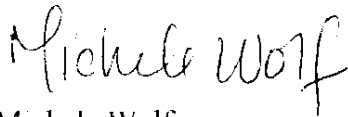
Because this independence for people with speech disabilities in Pennsylvania is necessary, I strongly urge AT&T and the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission to work together to provide an STS outreach service similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach service in Minnesota.

Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such a service may cost \$360,000 annually in Pennsylvania given our state's high population. Many states have sufficient surcharge money to fund an STS outreach service without difficulty. Vocational rehabilitation client services money may be available to teach people to use STS as it fosters independence and makes people more employable.

Many people with speech disabilities have other disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate for themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that services like STS outreach are adequately provided for.

I strongly urge that an annual budget of \$360,000 be established for an effective Speech-to-Speech outreach service in Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michele Wolf".

Michele Wolf

Cc: Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission
Bureau of Consumer Services
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-326

Cc: Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Cc: Teresa Feeney, AT&T Customer Care
100 S. Jefferson Street, Suite 115
New Castle, PA 16101

Cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation
Attn: Program Evaluation
2000 Evergreen Street
Sacramento, CA 95815